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Hundred Point Sales Letters

with Comment by
Cameron McPherson



Hundred Point Sales Letters

John Cameron Aspley

With Comment by

Cameron McPherson Appendix

Author of "Letters that Close the Sale and Why"



CHICAGO

THE DARTNELL CORPORATION

Publishers "Sales Management Magazine"

"The Hardware Salesman"

Dartnell Sales Service and Books on Selling

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1801 Leland Avenue, Ravenswood Station, Chicago, Ill.
Entered in Stationer's Hall, London

PRINTED BY THE DARTNELL PRESS

APR 13 1921

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The Points of a Hundred Point Sales Letter

Selling Qualities of The Letter

	<i>Points</i>
1—Is the Start Effective?	5
Be careful it does not challenge the reader and put him into an antagonistic frame of mind. When possible give it a news start, or embody in it the reason for writing. Don't start off from nowhere	
2—Does It Appeal to the Reader's Self-interest?	20
The motives that make men act are (1) Love; (2) Gain; (3) Pride; (4) Duty; (5) Fear; (6) Self-indulgence. Unless your letter appeals to these motives in an irresistible way you will not get action.	
3—Does It Make Him Want What You Are Selling?	10
You cannot sell a man something he does not want. If you are selling a chair make him think how nice it would feel to lounge in a big easy chair and smoke his after dinner cigar. Use your words to paint pictures rather than to merely state facts.	
4—Does It Create Confidence?	15
Are you asking him to take your word—a stranger whom he has never even met—that what you say is true? Why not use a testimonial paragraph and let someone else tell about your virtues? What provision have you made in case he is not satisfied? Are you asking him to buy a pig in a poke?	
5—Does It Ask for an Order?	5
Remember people are not mind readers. You may know perfectly well why you are writing them and what you want them to do—but do they? Never send a letter out without clearly stating in the last paragraph just exactly what you want the reader to do.	

Composition of The Letter

	<i>Points</i>
1—Does It Invite Reading?	20
Are paragraphs short and margins wide? Is it free from erasures? Is the signature legible?	
2—Is It Easy to Understand?	10
Break up all involved sentences into several short ones. Use a sentence for each idea. Be careful about pronouns, be sure that the reference is clear in each case. Avoid parenthetical and explanatory clauses.	
3—Is the Action Continuous?	10
Blue pencil all meaningless words and phrases. Get the message you want to convey clearly fixed in your mind, and make each step in the letter a step to that end.	
4—Does It Reflect Your Personality?	5
Tone down extravagant statements that will give the impression you are a braggart. Let it carry an atmosphere of sincerity and desire to serve. Be watchful for superlatives and the use of the word "very".	
5—Is It Grammatically Correct?	5
Have you used "was" when you ought to say "were"; "who" in place of "whom"; "differ with" instead of "differ from"; "shall" instead of "will", etc.?	

Why Some Letters Pull and Others Don't

H AVE you ever heard a sales manager say of a salesman: "He's a good talker and seems able to get his prospect right up to the closing point, but he's a poor closer." It is a common fault with salesmen. It is still more common with sales letters. There are any number of men and women who can write a good business letter. The diction is above criticism. The grammar is flawless. It meets every rule in the copy book. It reads smooth and leaves a pleasing impression. In short, it does everything a letter ought to do except the most important thing of all—bring back the order.

The knack of being able to write a sales letter that will do this cannot be learned from books, any more than one can learn from books how to paint a Rembrandt. The multitude of books that purport to teach you how to write letters have spoiled more promising correspondents than they have helped. Such books have a tendency to hamper initiative, undermine originality and encourage writing by rule. The first step in writing successfully—and this applies to writing articles or letters—is to forget rules and be yourself. To use the words of a very successful letter writer, "climb into the envelope and seal the flap."

There is, however, one sure and never failing way to become a writer of successful sales letters and that is by constant practice plus comparing the works of other successful letter writers with your own. In other words, give full play to your own personality in your letters, but at the same time profit by the other man's work. Study his letters. Find out why they pulled. See what he has done that you might do. In most cases you will find that your own methods, the result of years of experience, are best suited to your personality and to the requirements of your particular problem. But frequently you will find some strategem of expression, some plan of attack, perhaps a better way of putting something that you find frequent occasion to use in your letters that will help you to increase

Why Some Letters Pull and Others Don't

returns. You can well afford to search hard and long for these "tricks of the trade" for they are what make the difference between just an ordinary sales letter and a hundred pointer.

Do not hesitate to rewrite a letter several times if necessary to make sure that it is perfectly clear. Nine-tenths of the sales letters that go out fail because the writer did not get firmly fixed in his own mind just what he wanted the recipient of his letter to do, and then plan his letter to attain his objective. Too many letters ramble about and go nowhere. To read them is like watching an eight ring circus. After you have read them you have no definite impression—just a mass of jumbled words. Make your letters paint a picture. All the words in the dictionary won't sell goods. Only ideas, indelibly impressed on the mind of a reader, will provoke action.

Another obvious, yet too often overlooked, reason letters don't pull is that the writer forgets that the person he is writing to is not much interested in what he is writing. On the contrary it has been demonstrated that seven times out of ten a recipient (especially if he is a business man) will read only the opening paragraph, take a flying jump at the middle and then examine the last paragraph to find out what it is all about and how much it costs. The most successful sales letters are those that carry a complete selling message in the last paragraph or in the return card. The American business man is a good deal of a grasshopper. He reads on the jump, he decides on the jump and he acts on the jump. A letter that requires a close and thorough reading to make the sale will only sell that small percentage of readers who have formed the excellent habit of slow and deliberate reading.

Another point to remember that will always add a percent or two to your returns is to put a reason for writing a man into the first paragraph of your letter, and tell him just exactly what you want him to do in the last paragraph. This may sound ridiculously elementary, but you will be amazed at the number of letters that start out with a funny story dragged in by the seat of the pants, and then close without even asking for an or-

Why Some Letters Pull and Others Don't

der! Can you imagine a salesman walking into your office and starting off to tell you a funny story without even saying what the reason for his visit was, and then going away without telling you what he wanted you to do? Can you imagine how many orders he would get? A letter is a salesman on paper. The same motives that make men buy from a man will make him buy from a letter.

In the following pages I have reproduced some letters that have proved unusually successful. I have called them 100 Point Letters, because like the 100 Point Salesman they have made quota plus. Accompanying each letter I have attempted to show why it was successful. Study each of these letters carefully. Bisect it for ideas that you can use. You will have to dig for them, but they are there if you look hard enough. I am sure that you will find at least one thought that will help you write better letters. That is all any book or treatise on the subject of letter writing can hope to do.

CAMERON McPHERSON

Come to the Point Quickly

IT is said of Cyrus Curtis, of the Curtis Publishing Company, that a great deal of his success is due to his ability to edit letters. He is adept at wielding the blue pencil. One of his regular "stunts" is to take the last paragraph of a letter and put it first.

A common fault of inexperienced writers is to kill their stories with drawn out introductions. Business men who wouldn't think of going into a prospective buyer's office and opening a sales canvass with a funny story think it "clever" to start their letters out that way. There are even so-called letter experts who insist on beginning a letter with some remote introduction which they drag into the letter by the seat of the pants. You, no doubt, can recall many such letters. They probably succeeded in getting your attention, but they didn't get your money. In the vernacular of the stage, the action was sluggish.

There are buyers who will stand for the drawn-out introduction and may even like it. But the great majority of American business men want to know "what's on your mind". They want you to get to the point. Reading our morning's mail is a routine duty that we want to get over with quickly. We have no time to take pleasure jaunts off to wonderland.

The writer recently made an interesting test to determine the relative value of different ways of opening a letter. To a list of 5,000 manufacturers he sent the same letter with five different opening paragraphs—using a different style of first paragraph for every 1,000 names. The letter to the first lot

of names began by asking a question. It pulled 2.3% replies. The letter to the second thousand had a news start and produced 3.3% replies. For the third letter a sensational statement was used but the returns were less than 2%; the fourth letter attempted to sympathize with the reader and the returns were also less than 2%, but the fifth letter took the reader's attention for granted and boldly asked permission in the very first sentence to send the book "on suspicion". It won the test with a return of 4.3%.

A good illustration of how an otherwise good letter was spoiled by dilatory action was related by the late Edgar W. Jordan, considered one of the most able producers of sales letters of his time. Mr. Jordan was commissioned to prepare a letter for a manufacturer of roach powder. The letter was to be mailed out to hospitals. The first letter started out by saying that the writer had talked with many hospital superintendents and knew just how they felt about roaches, etc. In the middle of the letter he finally came to the point and made the assertion that it was unnecessary for them to have any roaches at all, that he would undertake to rid their premises of roaches on a "no riddance, no pay" basis. This letter pulled three percent returns, but it did not pay. So another letter—that shown on the page facing was prepared. This letter came to the point quickly. There was no side excursion as in the first letter, yet the same identical talking points were used and the same names circularized. The second letter pulled over five times the orders that the first one did, scoring seventeen percent replies.

LETTER BY
EDGAR W. JORDAN
DETROIT

My Dear Sir:

Each cockroach upon your premises-
Is there with your full permission.

I undertake to prove this to you if you will give two minutes to the reading
of this letter.

I will rid your premises of every last trace of roaches without one penny of
your money being produced. I mean every syllable of that statement. I can't make it too
strong. So, I am going to repeat it and emphasize it.

Tell me how many floors are in your hospital and what size they are.

I'll send you enough of Murray's Roach Doom to exterminate every roach. And
they'll stay exterminated for one year by Shrewsbury clock--one year.

You send no money, remember. I stake Murray's Doom against your roaches.
When they're gone, to your satisfaction, then you can remit the small amount we ask. Are
you willing?

Now let me tell you what Murray's Roach Doom is.

It's a powder that is not poisonous. It is practically odorless.

It is distributed, first, by means of the Murray powder "gun" which a 10-year-old
child can use. Get it to where the roaches are. Then the fun begins.

Roaches can't keep away from this powder. They love it. But the minute they
touch it they actually go crazy. They race through every nook and cranny of their hiding-
places. They carry it with them. They distribute it where no human agency could reach.
The young roaches, which very rarely appear in public, come in contact with the Doom. And
they're gone.

The strength of Murray's Doom does not abate for one year. As the eggs, which
are deposited in the runways, hatch out the young encounter the Doom. And they're gone.

And I prove all these things to you by standing behind my 24-year-old guar-
antee of "No riddance, no pay".

You send me no money until the roaches are gone.

I'm even enclosing a Special Trial Offer Slip which lets you in on a special
price when you do remit, because you will--it never misses.

If you can frame a fairer offer than that I'll gladly sign it--but, remember,
you're responsible for the presence of roaches on your premises after this.

Yours very sincerely,

This letter sent to 5,000 names pulled 17 percent returns whereas returns
on previous letters mailed to the same list had averaged only a little better
than 3 percent.

The Much Over-Worked "You"

WHEN teaching the mysteries of sales correspondence first became a popular indoor sport there was one thing that the teacher always emphasized. "Never, never, never," he wrote, "talk about 'we'—always write from the 'you' point of view, because there is nothing that interests a man so much as himself." The net result of all this agitation was a deluge of letters that "youed" at you from the opening paragraph to the closing period. It was 'you' this, and 'you' that and 'you' the other thing.

While it is undeniably true that a man is more interested in himself than he is in any one else, nevertheless it is a mistake to think that "I" and "we" have no place in a sales letter. If your letter is written with the idea of service and helpfulness, it doesn't matter much how many "we's" and "I's" you put into it. The important thing is to be able to put yourself in the other fellow's place, and discuss things that interest him rather than discuss things that interest you.

For illustration take a letter selling soap. You are pardonably proud of the fact that your soap is nearly pure—purer perhaps than any other soap sold at the price. You have worked hard to acquire a reputation as a quality soap maker. You have made many sacrifices in order that your customers will know you as being fair and honorable. If you

are guided wholly by instinct you will incline to harp on these points in your letters. But the man you are writing to doesn't care nearly as much about these things as he does about what your soap will do for him.

The man you are writing to, if he is a dealer, wants to know how much profit he can make on your soap, what you are going to do to help him sell it, and why he should put in another brand of soap when he already has a dozen similar brands on his shelves. If he is a consumer he is interested in its purity only from the standpoint of how it will affect his skin, its cleansing properties and its economy. The fact that you were established in business in 1805, or that your plant takes up ten acres or that you make enough soap to reach from New York to San Francisco every month, are not of direct interest except when they are used to prove a statement that does interest him.

The first principle of salesmanship—either mail or personal—is to sell functions. There are exceptions to this, as in selling a technical product where it is generally best to give a buyer the facts and let him arrive at his own conclusions through them, but as a general rule the less your letter talks about the product and the more it talks about what it will do for the man who buys it, the more effective it will be.

LETTER BY
WILLIAM B. SIMMONS
CHICAGO

Dear Sir:

If you aren't too busy, "suppose" with me a few minutes. If you can't do it now, shove this back on your desk until you can.

Suppose, first, a new family moved into your community - a family you knew would be desirable customers, a family whose trade you knew you could hold, once you got it started.

Suppose, next you met the head of that family, and as courteously and tactfully as you could you spoke of your store, your goods, and your desire to show him that you deserved his business. And - he turned on his heel without a word to you.

Suppose again you met him, and again you tried to show him from another angle that it would be to his profit, as well as yours, to trade with you. And - again he refused to even answer.

Suppose now, you repeated your requests on a dozen different occasions and each time he bottled up like a clam - couldn't get a word out of him.

I'll bet you'd be "hoppin' mad." Well, in a way, you're him, and I'm you. I've written you a dozen or more letters, and each time, so to speak, you've spun on your heel without even an answer. BUT, here's the difference, I'm not a bit mad, but I'm mighty curious.

I've searched our proposition over from A to Izzard, trying to find out where it has fallen down in your eyes - why it has failed to interest you.

Within the last six months, 682 first class merchants have ordered from us for the first time. If every single one of them isn't thoroughly satisfied, I don't know it, and a kick into this office hits me first.

I'm mighty curious to know why we haven't had a trial order from you. There is an order card attached. Ask your glove girl what she needs, and let us supply you. That would put us on trial.

Or write me where the hitch comes in that is keeping your house and ours apart. At any rate, please don't turn on your heel.

Very truly yours,

This letter pulled 71 percent replies! An analysis of 71 answers shows 14 orders; 11 requests for a salesman to call; 17 requests for quotations; 22 apologies for not answering previous letters; and seven "not interested".

Be Sparing of Superlatives

THE tone of a letter makes or breaks it. The skilled salesman knows this and consequently strives in his letter to give it an atmosphere of restraint rather than extravagance. There has been a lot of fun poked at such expressions as "we beg to state" "your obedient servant" and "with your permission", and perhaps these are a bit unnecessary, but they at least serve to give a letter a tone of humility which is always pleasing to a reader.

The tone of a letter is influenced to a great extent by the use of superlatives. Such statements as "the best in the world", "the very best made", "none better", however true they may be, give to your letter the flavor of braggadocio that is decidedly harmful. In a manual issued by the National Cash Register Company to its salesmen there is a section devoted to this important point. The salesmen are told that one extravagant statement causes a buyer to discount every other statement a salesman makes. It challenges disbelief and increases sales resistance.

The letters of both Lincoln and Franklin, while not sales letters, are noteworthy because of the tone of sincerity and deference to the opinions of others. Commenting on the importance of humility as a factor in dealing with men, Benjamin Franklin says in his autobiography: "I cannot boast of much success in acquiring the reality of this virtue, but I had a good deal with regard to the appearance of it. I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiment of others and all positive assertions of my own. I even forbid myself, agreeably to the old laws of our Junto, the use of every word or expression in the language that importuned a fixed opinion, such as certainly, undoubtedly, etc., and I have adopted in-

stead of them, *I conceive*, *I apprehend*, or *I imagine* a thing to be so and so, or it so appears to me at present.

"When another asserted something that I thought an error, I denied myself the pleasure of contradicting him abruptly, and in answering I began by observing that in certain cases or circumstances his opinion would be right, but in the present case there seemed to me to be some difference. The modest way in which I proposed my opinions procured for them a readier reception and less contradiction."

So important is the tone of a letter that it is often wise to deliberately *understate* what might not be readily believed. "During our 30 years in business we have not had a single dissatisfied customer" may be an absolutely true statement. But to the man who meets you for the first time by letter it sounds "fishy" to say the least. He would greatly discount such a statement and discount every other statement you made as well. On the other hand, if you said "During 30 years in business we have only had 3 dissatisfied customers," he would unconsciously feel that you were an honest man and would tell the real facts—not merely write what you wished were facts.

Exact statements and exact figures should be used for the same reason in preference to approximated statements and "round" numbers. They stamp your letter with the earmarks of accuracy. "Last year we sold 1,127,106 packages" is far better practice than "last year we sold over a million". These are points, which in themselves are not important, but which from the standpoint of affecting the "tone" of your letters, make the difference between success and failure.

LETTER BY
C. A. MAC FARLANE
NEW YORK

August 20th, 1909.

Mr. Robert E. Buchanan,
Chicago University, Chicago.

Dear Sir:

Probably you will be pretty busy trying to keep cool when this letter reaches you; but it will nevertheless pay you to take time to think a little, right now, about YOUR FALL CLOTHES.

Think, not about the sins of your tailor, but about your own negligence which so often heretofore has stood in the way of your getting "exactly what you wanted."

Think how the best patterns have been made up for other men by the time you got around to order--and then DON'T THINK I am "rushing the season" when I tell you that my line of FALL AND WINTER WOOLENS are now ready for your inspection.

This early announcement, that you have perhaps come to regard as a perfunctory trade appeal, is a REAL OPPORTUNITY for the man who wants to buy the most satisfaction as well as the best obtainable clothes for a given sum of money.

By selecting your suitings well in advance of the season you not only get first choice of the confined patterns which cannot be duplicated; but also the benefit of leisurely, unhurried tailoring. Less chance for a garment to be wrong in the first place; more chance, if it is wrong, to make it right.

Here in my new REPUBLIC BUILDING establishment you will find an exceptional assortment of Imported and Domestic fabrics for fall wear - and you will find an organization capable of workmanship that makes every completed suit or overcoat a real bargain at the price that is asked for it.

Come in at your convenience, and let me reserve the patterns you like, even if you are not now ready to order.

Yours very truly,

This letter was mailed slightly in advance of the season to a list of members in clubs and associations. It resulted in enough business to keep the tailor working at capacity for three months, and added 150 new accounts.

Quality is Difficult to Register

DURING the late war a piano merchant in a Western mining town loaded up with low priced pianos anticipating the demand to follow in the wake of high wages paid to miners. Much to his surprise he soon sold out the few high priced pianos he had in stock, but found it quite impossible to sell cheap ones. The miners wanted only the very best. Finally he hit upon the expedient of marking the cheap pianos up to the prices asked for Steinway's and Mason & Hamlin's. He soon disposed of his entire stock.

This incident reveals a peculiarity of human nature common to all of us. We usually judge quality by the price tag. Consequently it is a good plan in selling a quality product to use the high price as a talking point, instead of trying to explain it away. The mere statement that the thing you are selling is the highest price article made will often convey proof of quality lacking in several pages of argument.

It is a mistake to assume, however, that people want quality. They don't. They have to be made to want it first. The average person is always looking for something cheap. First cost looms up much bigger than ultimate cost with most of us. Consequently in selling a quality product against price competition, the first thing to do in your letter is to make the buyer *want* quality before you start to tell him about the quality points of your particular article.

A roller bearing maker tried for years to sell his bearings to a manufacturer of railroad hand cars. But because they would add \$4.00 to the price

of the hand car he was never able to succeed. The hand car manufacturer held that he couldn't get \$104 for the cars with the quality bearings and the added expense would mean \$10,000 a year added to his costs which was equal to nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ of his total profits. The bearing manufacturer finally sold him by showing the hand car maker how he could double his sales if he could guarantee his cars for two years. The bearings were the weakest part of the car, so he had to improve them before he could dare guarantee the car itself.

A well-known saw salesman, for example, makes it a point to ask a prospect if he could sell a *high* priced saw. Thus he takes his product out of the run-of-the-case class at the very beginning of his canvass. When the wily dealer counters with: "What do you mean—*high* priced saw?" It gives the salesman his opportunity to bring out the various reasons why the dealer can make more money selling a saw that insures satisfaction as compared with one that will most likely prove unsatisfactory.

Another good way of registering quality is to associate your article with other products of undisputed quality. A magazine reaching dentists uses this slogan: "*The Printers' Ink* of the dental field". Advertisers know *Printers' Ink* to be a publication of quality. The association automatically places the unknown publication on a plane with the well-known one in the reader's mind. In the same way a manufacturer of phosphate registers quality by comparing his phosphate with the Steinway piano.

LETTER BY
E. M. PAGET
CHICAGO

Gentlemen:

A long, long time ago an honest man named Steinway started in to make Pianos. His one idea was to make good pianos; better than could be produced. Today the name Steinway stands for all that is good in Pianos.

I know not how long Mr. Steinway seasoned his sounding boards under running water - some people tell me it was for ten years. But I do know that he seasoned them until they were RIGHT. And, like every other part of his instrument, it was the best that could be made.

I've a little Dutch E style upright Steinway that has been in our family since 1877 - 40 years of constant use. And on those evenings when my duties do not call me away on the road, I listen to delightful music from this same instrument. And I wonder, as a discordant strain sometimes reaches my ear from a neighborhood "competitor" if their nearly-new piano has a sounding board seasoned for six or eight months - instead of as many years. Guarantees are cheap - mayhap my neighbor's piano was guaranteed "Just as good as a Steinway" - and the price "much less"!

While not familiar with the vicissitudes of Mr. Steinway's early career, I can hear people saying to him: "Why, Steinway, I can buy Pianos just as good as yours for half the price". And I can imagine as inscrutable smile on his sad countenance as he gently turns to pursue his labors. For even while he knew he had the best piano made, do you think he was content at that? No sir! Like every true artisan, he was constantly studing, planning, scheming to make it better.

We believe our Self-Rising Biscuit Flour Phosphate is the best made. We know that it gives better results in self-rising biscuit flour than any other phosphate. We have studied, planned, worked and experimented these past 29 years to produce the best self-rising biscuit flour phosphate that can be made. The success of every one of our customers shows how well we have succeeded.

And if you will tell us how we can help you to use more of our goods we will do it gladly and cheerfully.

Respectfully,

The man who wrote this letter took his compensation in the form of a commission on sales from his letters. In one year, wholly through letters like this, he made over \$18,000. And that was when \$18,000 was \$18,000.

One Point at a Time

A SALE is made in a man's mind. Before you can get his order it is therefore necessary to register a sequence of impressions, the combined result of which will be to make him want the thing you are selling more than the money it costs. If the amount is larger than \$10 it is practically impossible to register the necessary number of selling impressions in one letter. A series of letters is needed.

In planning a series of letters determine whether the recipient is going to be hostile or receptive to your proposition. Then set down on paper the outstanding points that must be registered in the buyer's mind before he will act. Make each of these points the basis of a letter, rather than write a series of letters each of which echoes all the points.

A sales letter that foolishly tries to put over a number of sales points at one time invariably will fail, because lack of space prevents your adequately registering any of them. It is not enough to merely state a point. You must dramatize it in such a way that it will create a sales picture in the mind of the man you wish to sell.

Illustrating this principle: Assume that you are selling a mechanical device which has three distinct construction features, a very low price in proportion to what it does, a long life, and a host of satisfied users. You could quite easily get up a letter that would cover all six of these points, but it

would lack effectiveness. Much better results would be obtained, and a far greater yield from the list would result, if a series of five or six letters is used, each letter taking up one point of superiority at a time.

In planning such a series, however, change the dress of the letter for each mailing. One letter-head, for example, might picture the feature being discussed. Another might show a cut of the factory, still another might be of the four page illustrated type, the inside pages carrying the descriptive matter and the first or letter page carrying the personalized sales appeal. By varying the dress in this way there is little likelihood of the recipient laying the letter aside unread as a result of having recognized the letter-head.

Another good idea for varying the dress of a series of letters is to have each letter in the series signed by a different executive. The J. I. Case Plow Works use this idea in their follow-up literature effectively. One letter is from the branch manager, another from the general sales manager, the next from the production manager, still another from the manager of the service department, and the last or final letter from the president himself, neatly typed on the personal engraved letter-head used by that official for occasions of importance. A letter-head and letter used in a follow-up by the Crawford Chair Company to "put over" the service they are able to render is shown on the page opposite.

George Hefferan,
President

Frederick A. Gorham,
Vice-President

J. Harry Schoneberger,
Secretary-Manager



Crawford's Service Department

CRAWFORD
CHAIR
COMPANY

GRAND LEDGE, MICH.

December 6, 1913.

Printers' Ink Publishing Co.,
New York, N. Y.

You order goods and make promises for delivering them based on the manufacturer's promise of delivery. That day comes -- but the goods don't. You write and get another promise -- and another disappointment. You write again and -- well, by that time you're considered about the biggest liar in the whole state -- with no exceptions -- and "unreliability" is stamped two inches deep under the hide of that customer and the resolution to avoid your store hereafter is inherited by her next two generations.

For two thousand years men put thread in the wrong end of the needle. Then Howe came along -- changed it -- and ever since we have had the sewing machine.

Since the time of Thomas Sheraton, furniture factories have promised shipments in the "hit and miss" way. Shipments have been grossly miscalculated. The dealer has stood the brunt and is still paying the penalty every day.

Post says, "There's a reason". I say, "There's several Reasons". Our human service -- which is the highest form of self interest -- is explained fully on the inside of this letter head. In addition to good chairs, a chair factory must show signs of life -- have a brain -- a conscience -- and the dealers interest at heart. Otherwise it's the "toboggan" for both of us.

Investigate this service next month when you're in Grand Rapids. We shall be at the same old stand -- first floor of the Klingman Building.

JHS/0

Manager
CRAWFORD CHAIR COMPANY

READ THE WORKING OF "OUR SERVICE DEPARTMENT" ON INSIDE OF THIS LETTERHEAD

This letter was not intended to produce direct returns. It is reproduced here merely as an exhibit to illustrate the way one concern "put over" the service idea. Letter by H. M. Van Hosen.

If it is to the Jobbers' Salesman

THE jobber's salesman is usually the weak link in the distribution chain when the product is sold through those channels. As a rule he is a "thumber"—meaning that his main occupation is asking the dealer what he wants today and then thumbing through a voluminous catalogue to get the price. It is seldom that he goes out of his way to sell the dealer your product. Yet if he did this to any extent at all it would easily double and treble your sales in his particular territory. If you could get several hundred jobbers' salesmen to do this it would mean a substantial sales gain and a larger volume.

Getting the jobber's salesman to talk up your line is not an easy matter, but it can be done. It can be done by means of advertisements placed in publications circulating among jobbers salesmen such as "*The Hardware Salesman*" going to wholesale hardware salesmen all over the country, and *The Jobbers' Salesman* circulating in the electrical field. Sometimes it is possible to get the jobbers to furnish you with a mailing list of their salesmen and you can then write them direct as well as reach them with your advertising.

The secret of getting jobbers to let you have mailing lists of their salesmen is to convince them that it is your intention to help their men sell your competitor's as well as your own products. If you make saws explain to the jobber that you have some ideas which you want to pass on to his salesmen that will help them to sell more saws. If you

make cover paper tell the jobber you want to tell his salesmen how they can get an order of cover paper with every order of book paper. If you will do this the jobber will be far more likely to heed your request than if you give him the impression that your object is to get him to push your particular product to the exclusion of other competing products carried by him, some of which for all you know, may pay him a larger profit.

It must be remembered, however, that jobbers' salesmen are very busy men, and as a rule are over-burdened with circular matter. Consequently to get their favorable attention you must resort to strategy. You have got to devise some sort of a plan that will arouse their interest, and make them look forward to each successive letter in the campaign. An excellent illustration of such a campaign is "Oval-F" series of letters and mailing pieces used by the Miniature Lamp Division of the Federal Mazda Lamp Works of the General Electric Company. A typical letter from this series is shown on the facing page.

It is interesting to note that as a result of this campaign, sales of jobbers were greatly stimulated. It was impossible to keep definite figures, the company reports, but many instances are cited to show the effectiveness of the letters. For example, the Chicago office points to certain jobbers whose lamp sales for the month following the campaign were the largest in their history.



THE OVAL F BRAND

Dear Pardner:-

One of the first things for a good cow-man to do is to make sure he's connected up with a first class outfit - not a bunch of rustlers or greasers.

Just so, I'd like you to realize that the Oval F outfit is made up of boys who are mighty handy at roping, hogtieing and branding auto lamp business. We're real proud to have a fancy rider and roper like yourself in our outfit; we'll back your play to the limit and we'll count on your loyalty to the same limit.

The Oval F brand is better known than any other brand on the range, bar none. It stands for National quality and the buyer is glad to pay a better price for this brand than for culls he could purchase a lot cheaper. We are specialists on miniature lamps. We do not handle large lamps and we sell primarily only through jobbers.

Believing in your brand and in your outfit is half the battle; it raises your enthusiasm and lowers sales resistance. That's why I am so anxious that you should believe heart and soul in Federal Mazda auto lamps and in the organization behind them before actually hopping into the saddle to take part in the sales round-up. The booklet "Individuality plus Organization" which I am sending enclosed, will tell you something of the Oval F outfit.

Also under separate cover I'm sending you the Oval F branding iron. I hope you'll keep it so busy that it won't have a chance to rust.

More about the round-up next week.

Heartily yours

H D Harday
Foreman, Oval F



The test of a letter to jobber's salesmen is largely the effect it has on the jobber. Practically every jobber handling Federal Miniature Lamps wrote complimentary letters to the manufacturer who used this series of letters.

Staging the Letter is Important

ARTHUR Brisbane, the famous editor, scored a bull's eye when he said that a good picture was worth a thousand words. People get the picture habit in the cradle and it sticks to them through life. If you don't believe it watch the average man open up a magazine—the first thing he does is to look at the pictures. It is so easy to look at a picture. In order to capitalize the universal liking to look at pictures the so-called "illustrated letter" is useful. Harper & Brothers, who carry the use of specially designed illustrated letter heads to a nice point, report that on a mailing returns will average about one-quarter of one percent better when an illustrated letter head is used than from the same letter on plain stationery. This means two and one-half added orders for every 1,000 circulars mailed out.

The success of the single page illustrated letter led Phil Lennon, of the Royal Tailors, but at that time associated with H. M. Van Hosen in direct mail advertising, to design some years ago what has since become known as "the four-page illustrated letter head". The advantages of this style of letter head are that it costs less to produce than a letter with enclosure separate, and has the advantage of keeping the letter and descriptive matter together. They reach the recipient together, and they are filed together. One cannot become separated from the other. This style of letter head has had a large run.

It has its drawbacks, however, and should be used cautiously.

The A. W. Shaw Company find that better results can be secured with homely stationery than from letters where no expense is spared on making the dress attractive. The most productive letters sent out by this concern have been printed on the cheapest kind of paper, with an equally poor grade of printing. Shaw also has found one-cent stamps more profitable than two-cent postage, and does not fill in form letters. While the use of two-cent postage slightly increases the returns from a mailing, the increased returns do not justify the added cost. A filled-in letter, unless perfectly done, is likely to make a man hostile to the letter. A good caption is quite as good, if not to be preferred.

Don't fool yourself about fooling people with circular letters. There is something about a letter written to a composite audience that gives itself away no matter how well the mechanical details have been worked out. In a great many cases the moment the reader sees your name he knows instinctively that you are trying to sell him something. He also knows, without reading your letter, that you have no reason for writing him personally and especially. So long as a majority of your readers are so minded, why spend time or money trying to make them think your letter is something that it isn't. Deception is a poor foundation for confidence building. Without confidence there can be no sales.

LETTER BY
JOHN I. HOWE, JR.
NEW YORK

"Hey Tom-Tom Sawyer!"

Harper & Brothers
Franklin Square - New York
Established - 1817

Dear Mr.

You have read, possibly, of the captured English aviator who was mistreated by his German jailer, until he discovered his fondness for MARK TWAIN - and lived thereafter on the fat of the land, such as it was.

In any case, you know that the genius of MARK TWAIN sweeps over all boundaries and hatreds - that people who have read his works are brothers - that he has carried the best of America to king and peasant in every land.

To you, of MARK TWAIN'S own America. we are making a new and special offer.

To combat the high cost of all the materials of book manufacturers, we have made one limited edition of a special set of all the best of MARK TWAIN, in 12 volumes, at an extraordinarily low price.

With this set, we will give you, absolutely free, 5 volumes of REX BEACH - the most popular writer of thrilling American stories living today - stories MARK TWAIN would have loved if he could have lived to read them.

Both these sets are splendid books, made according to standards of book making that are nowadays all too rare. Never before has the HOUSE OF HARPER made such an extraordinary offer - an offer that by virtue of its attractiveness cannot last long.

The card enclosed is your opportunity if you act quickly. Fill it out and mail it to us. There is no obligation. But you must be quick or there will be no sets left for you.

You may examine the books for ten days. If you do not like them, send them back. If you do, pay a small amount monthly.

This is an opportunity that will not come again. Send the card at once.

Yours very truly,

Harper & Brothers

© HARPER & BROTHERS
1917

© BRADLEY
"HE WALKED WITH KINGS"

© FROM ALBERT & GELOW PAINES
"BOY'S LIFE OF MARK TWAIN"

By using illustrated letter heads in colors Harper & Brothers find they can increase the returns on letters selling books one quarter of one percent. The average return on letters of this kind averages about 2 percent.

When Answering Inquiries

HOMER Buckley tells of a case where his firm wanted to buy a motor truck. He wrote eleven companies for literature and prices. In only one instance was the inquiry handled intelligently, that concern being The White Company. This company made an analysis of Mr. Buckley's needs without his knowing it, then wrote him fully and at length. As a result the White Company got the business.

Thousands of dollars are lost to concerns every year because they fail to properly handle inquiries. Inquiries cost a great deal of money to secure, yet they are all too often regarded as a nuisance and handled mechanically. It pays to take pains to answer a man's questions when he writes you for information. It is a mistake to send him a stereotyped form letter and hope that the salesman will do the rest. Better by far not to send any letter at all.

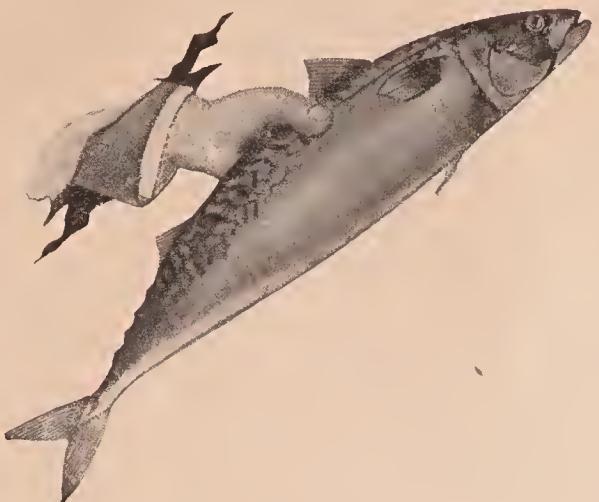
When the unit of sale is small, and necessity compels the use of form letters for this purpose it is good practice to devote the letter to *getting the catalogue read*. Too often the letter merely duplicates the catalogue. It is filled with meaningless generalities. It annoys, rather than informs, the prospective buyer.

An excellent plan is to prepare several form letters that fit different classes of inquiries. If the product is being sold to concerns in varied lines of

business prepare a letter with descriptive matter that will fit each particular application. When a banker writes to The Addressograph Company for information about the addressograph he does not receive a general letter telling him what a wonderful machine the addressograph is, but he gets a carefully drawn letter telling him *how* the addressograph is profitably used by bankers all over the country. That is what interests him—*how he can save money by using the addressograph in his business*.

In the same way a concern selling underground garbage cans by mail sends you a neatly printed booklet giving you all the information you need to place an order, and supplements this piece by a personal letter giving the names of neighbors of yours who have installed these garbage cans and found them satisfactory.

By use of an electric typewriter it is possible to give a personal touch to letters answering inquiries which go far toward making the prospect pleased. In using these machines your letter is perforated on a paper stencil similar to a piano player roll. It is then put on the machine and any number of letters can be quickly run off, the machine automatically stopping at desired points to give the operator an opportunity to fill in special information. One girl with three of these machines can turn out an increditable number of letters with an equally increditable increase in results.



FRANK E. DAVIS, PRESIDENT

ARTHUR C. DAVIS, TREASURER

FRANK E. DAVIS COMPANY

PACKERS, IMPORTERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Salt Mackerel Codfish, Fresh Lobster, Etc.

MAIL ORDER DEALERS

FOUNDED IN 1885

INCORPORATED IN 1905

Gloucester, Mass.

Mrs. J. C. Aspley,
Glencoe, Ill.

Dear Mrs. Aspley:

The best answer I can make to your inquiry about our fish is the circular enclosed. If you are really fond of good fish, I am sure you will enjoy reading it.

There is nothing I can add to it - except possibly to emphasize the point that my fish really are quite different from the store kind. My thirty years experience has taught me a lot about the fish business. And what I've learned I've turned into account for my customers.

I am growing gray. I have a nice business. And my fondest desire is that Frank E Davis' name may never mean anything to anyone, anywhere, but pleasant, satisfactory, honest dealing.

Send any order you wish from the enclosed circular with perfect confidence that it will please you or I will refund your money.

Yours very truly,

Frank E. Davis, Pres.

Frank E. Davis Company

Right from
the Fishing Boats
to You

Frank Davis has built up a business of 100,000 accounts by letter. This is the first in a series of follow-ups used on inquiries. It pulls 16 percent. The two succeeding letters bring the total inquiries sold to 33 percent.

Writing About Your Advertising

IT is time to put a soft pedal on talk about "creating a demand" in letters to dealers. Consumer advertising is a wonderful selling force. It has lifted obscure manufacturers into places of leadership. It has made captains of industry out of small business men. But we over-rate it when we think it is going to send crowds to the dealer's store demanding our goods. We even over-rate it if we think that our advertising alone will force a dealer to carry our merchandise.

A sales manager for a well-known food product concern, which depends on its national advertising to open up new accounts as well as move goods off the dealers' shelves, recently asked his salesmen to furnish him with a full report on every new dealer called upon who did not buy. An analysis of these reports at the end of the month showed more dealers had declined to buy "until they felt the demand" than for any other reason. The salesmen, it seemed, laid great stress on the demand that the advertising would create.

"Fine," said the dealer, "just as soon as I begin to get calls for it I will send you an order". In some cases, of course, the salesman was able to show the dealer that he could not afford to "wait until he had a call"—but it increased the selling resistance just that much. By changing the approach, so as to head off this objection, the percentage of "no sales" was cut down materially. The same should be true of your sales letters.

"From my experience," says R. A. Ware, general sales manager of the Log Cabin Products Company, "I do not believe there is a line, including Log Cabin Syrup, which retailers *must* carry, for if advertising could create such a pow-

erful demand it would force the retailer automatically to handle products so advertised and there would be no need for salesmen."

There are cases where exceptional results have been obtained from letters urging dealers to take advantage of national advertising — the letter used at the outbreak of the European war by The Three-in-One Oil Company being a case in point. But as a rule, better results are obtained if the letter contents itself with giving the dealer facts showing the number of people in his neighborhood who will read the advertising. Point out that advertised goods are easily sold. He knows this to be true and will agree with you. Experience has taught him that the advertising a manufacturer does familiarizes the consumer with the merit of the article. When the dealer offers it to the consumer the name will do the selling. It is not necessary for the dealer to devote several minutes to convincing a customer that it is reputable merchandise. This is called "consumer acceptance" merchandising, and is now used by many of the largest national advertisers.

Another point that should not be over-looked when you write a dealer about proposed national advertising is to talk profit on the unit sale as well as profit on the volume. Many dealers are prejudiced against advertised merchandise. They have an idea that they are paying for the advertising. They mentally associate advertised goods with small profit sellers. Consequently it is well to see that every letter going out paints a profit picture in the dealer's mind, with a tingling cash register in the foreground. There is nothing so dear to a dealer's heart as the jingle of his cash register.

LETTER BY
J. NOAH H. SLEE
NEW YORK

Dear Sir:

\$2,900 FOR ONE BIG AD IN YOUR CITY NEXT SUNDAY

We're not quitters. War or no war, we're advertising 3-in One stronger than ever. This is our big business opportunity -- and yours.

Next Sunday morning you will see \$2,900 worth of good 3-in-One advertising on the back cover page of the Sunday Magazine Section of the (name of local paper here). That big EXTRA ad is for an extra push for you right now - in addition to all our regular advertising going on all the time.

This is our fight against the Folly of Business Fear, against Business Cowardice. Everybody must eat, must wear clothes, must oil with 3-in-One. It's the cheapest because it goes the farthest. Everybody has known it for twenty years. The 1914 crops are record-breakers. We have a sound currency law. The Federal Reserve Board is created. An American Merchant Marine is rapidly being created - and the Panama Canal is doing business. Those are real reasons for us all to be optimists - and rout the dookers.

This new \$2,900 special ad will appear simultaneously in the Chicago Herald, Minneapolis Journal, Philadelphia Press, Pittsburgh Post, Washington Star, Buffalo Courier, Detroit Tribune, Baltimore Sun, Cleveland Leader and Cincinnati Commercial Tribune. It will cover the United States like a bed-spread. Your dealers will be immediately benefited - they will need 3-in-One Oil.

Remember, your profits are 24%, 26% and 29% -- REAL jobbing profits. How is your 3-in-One Oil stock? Can you take care of all orders for the 10¢, 25¢ and 50¢ sizes - and the fast selling 25¢ HANDY Oil Can? Why not call in your stock clerk right now and find out? Then --

Order today what you need, so you can "cash in" on this special push in your territory.

Yours optimistically,

THREE IN ONE OIL COMPANY.

For those who have forgotten how to write order-getting letters we show this one sent out to a list of jobbers during the panicy days of 1914. It sold almost immediately over 72,000 bottles of Three-in-One Oil.

“Halo” Sales as Talking Points

ONE of the large advertising agencies has been able to build up a lucrative business by simply selecting concerns whose advertising they would like to handle and then going to the customers of that concern and finding out from them why they put in the line. This information enabled the agency to prepare a series of advertisements which were far better than anything that concern had ever before used.

The next time you are in a quandry as to what to put into a series of follow-up letters take a look at your old ledgers. Pick out some of the “bell wether” accounts and find out the history of their dealings with your house. Find out how they came to start buying from you in the first place; why their orders have steadily increased and what they think of your proposition at this time. Not all of them will tell you, but you will surely get enough material in this way for a series of follow-up letters that cannot be beat.

The reason “halo” sales make such good letters is because people are like sheep—they follow the leader. If they know that the leaders in their lines are your customers they will feel more inclined to climb into the band wagon with them. Then, again, concrete statements carry more weight than generalities. It is much more effective to tell why one man buys from you, citing

names and figures, than it is to make a general statement telling why all the customers on your books buy from you.

The value of letters of this kind can be materially increased if the names mentioned are brought home to the reader by local association or by dividing your list into vocations. If you sell through the dealer, dealers in the South will be particularly impressed when you tell them why a certain well-known Southern store, in a city of about the same size as theirs, carries your line. If you sell to manufacturers, food product concerns would be more inclined to buy if you told them why the Beechnut Packing Company, or Armour & Company find it profitable to buy and use the thing you have to sell.

Watch your orders carefully for material of this sort. A plier manufacturer one day received an order for pliers from The American Telegraph and Telephone Company. He investigated and found that the purchasing department of this institution had made an analysis of the steel used in nearly twenty different pliers and had found that the steel used by this particular manufacturer graded eighty two out of a possible hundred points, while the steel used by his nearest competitor graded only sixty. Needless to state, this information gave him the basis for a letter that would be hard to excel as a confidence builder.

AUTHOR NOT KNOWN

Mr. John B. Smith,
Ashtabula, Ohio.

Dear Mr. Smith:

Just think!

The Wilson Stores Co. of Des Moines, New York, sent us their first order for shoes in 1914.

It amounted to only \$33.00. That was three years ago.

In 1915 they sent us their next order.

It amounted to \$185.00. That was two years ago.

In 1916 they ordered again.

The order went over \$500.00 -- and that was a year ago.

To-day I got another order from them. This order amounted to \$1,060.45.

Looks as though a line like ours is a pretty good thing for a store like theirs.

And as your store and their store are "two of a kind" -- each has a good trade that knows a good thing when they see it -- why wouldn't our line of shoes increase sales and profits for you just as it did for Wilson & Co.?

Their trade was slow and small at first. But STYLE plus VALUE soon made it grow quick and big.

Unless you give your business and your customers THE BEST you are the loser.

Just a small order to start will do to prove this to your trade and to your Bank a/c.

Then when the demand multiplies you can multiply your orders - and your profits will multiply themselves.

Yours for multiplication -- of that kind,

General Manager.

Five letters like the above, each citing the history of a star customer, added 573 new accounts to the books of a shoe concern which was already supposed to have "complete distribution."

Keep Off the Beaten Path

THE writer recently had occasion to make an analysis of the contents of the waste paper basket at the desk of a purchasing agent for a big public utility company. There were twenty-seven letters in it. Not one of the letters was above the ordinary. There was no plan behind them. The words themselves were colorless and commonplace. It seemed almost inconceivable that concerns of the type represented would let such letters leave their establishment.

If a letter is worth while sending out at all it is worth your while to take the time to choose words that mean something. We are all naturally inclined to mental laziness. We use the first word that comes to our mind. It is the easiest way. We excuse our shiftlessness by thinking that writing is out of our line anyway.

The main distinction between the work of a master letter writer and just an ordinary letter writer, is that he will spend an hour, or five hours if necessary, to pick the one word that will best express the thought he wants to register. I know an advertising man in New York who spent the best part of a week to think of three words that would get "punch" into an advertisement that he was writing. Yet the average business man would think it terrible if he

had to spend five minutes looking for a better word!

The letter for the Commercial Poster Company of Cleveland, written by James Wallen, is an excellent illustration of carefully chosen words. There is nothing clever about the letter. It does not tell a grotesque story to win attention. It holds your interest by the very force of its picturesque wording. Commenting on this letter, Henry C. Garrott, the St. Paul chocolate manufacturer said in the "Northwestern Druggist":

"This is what might be termed a super-sales letter. It goes to advertising managers of important firms. It is signed by the president of a large corporation, and I surmise he composed it — not his advertising department. I picture him as a dynamic person, who crowds his thoughts into the smallest possible space—one who concerns himself only with highly concentrated essentials — as befits the executive of a large establishment. There is something individual about the flow of his language. The words and phrases are not the ones generally used in similar connection. Yet, they seem to fit the writer's meaning exactly, and their unusualness adds vigor to the message. It is so crowded with thought, most of us must stop and think to get it. Then, it dawns on us, here is a very interesting piece of business literature."

LETTER BY
JAMES WALLEN
E. AURORA, N. Y.

Mr. James Wallen,
E. Aurora, N.Y.

Dear Sir:-

The enclosed proof exhibits an advertisement recently published in "Printers' Ink".

It is an endeavor to convey to poster users somewhat of the spirit we devote to the making of the murals of the streets.

pure, full-color inks, which retain their tones with indifference to burning sun and washing rain, are used on every poster put thru our plant.

We lithograph on paper with body that welcomes ink and holds it - the very best stock that the market yields..

These superior materials are handled in the true craftsman manner by men seasoned in lithography.

I will personally handle your inquiry and submit proposals on the creation and reproduction of "lithographs extraordinary.

Sincerely



A. McAndrews

President
THE COMMERCIAL POSTER COMPANY.

ARM/ARK

This letter proved unusually successful on a list of advertising managers. It not only pulled a high percentage of replies, but aroused much favorable comment.

Our Salesman is Coming to See You

ADVANCE letters are usually regarded as a help for salesmen. This, of course, they are. But the right kind of an advance letter will go far toward making a customer realize that he is doing business with *your* representative, and not with a salesman. In plain words: It will serve as a point of contact with the house thereby reducing just that much chance for a salesman to leave and take your best customers along with him.

Most advance letters and announcements are signed by the salesman. "I will be in your town on March 15th, don't place any orders for coffee until you see me" is the stereotyped form of the usual advance card. This is the kind of a card the salesman likes—it puts him in the limelight. Naturally the salesman welcomes every opportunity to get on an intimate, personal basis with his customers. But at the same time the personality of the house should be injected into the relationship as well as the personality of the salesman. The foregoing applies particularly, of course, to a salesman calling on established trade.

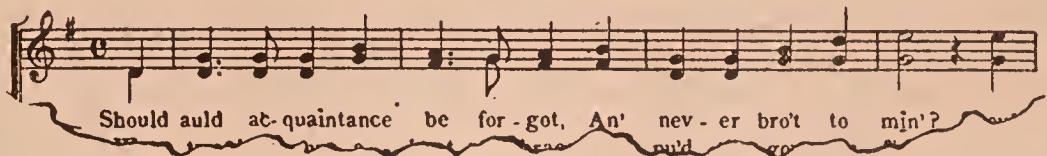
When the product is a one time seller — like a machine or service — advance letters can be used profitably to secure interviews. The right kind of a letter will usually pull about ten percent returns, most of which can be turned into orders by a good salesman. In this type of advance letter it is usually bad practice to attempt to get interviews by strategy. Make it an undisguised re-

quest for an interview, depending on an appeal to gain, pride or both.

In using advance cards in provincial territory, where buyers in one town are known to buyers in neighboring towns the returns from a mailing can be materially increased by the use of local names. Tell the prospective buyer about friends of his who have bought the thing you are selling and they will naturally want to find out what it is and what it can do for them. Every man in business harbors a secret fear that something is going to slip by him in the dark. It is a fear that can be exploited in advance letters.

When the prospects are restricted to a few concerns in a town, all of whom should be called upon by a salesman, it is well not to use a return card asking a salesman to call. Most business men don't want to be bothered with salesmen. Let the advance letter simply state that your salesman will call, and endeavor in the letter to get him a favorable interview. A great deal of a salesman's time is wasted in hop-skipping all over a territory to work questionable leads. Better results from a day's work will invariably be secured if he goes up one street and down another working the prospects as they come. This plan gives the salesman a greater number of hours in the presence of buyers, and it is a principle of salesmanship that the more time spent in the presence of buyers the greater the number of orders resulting.

Auld Lang Syne.



Southbridge, Mass.
October 5, 1916.

T. J. Baughton,
The Newark Optical Store
Newark, N. J.

Dear Mr. Baughton:

Last year increasing responsibilities in connection with his duties as Manager of our New York branch made it imperative for us to secure a representative to take over the territory which Mr. J.H. Bohling had covered for so many years.

You might think from glancing at the top of this letterhead that we were trying to pull some "sob stuff" with the lights dimmed and the orchestra playing "Hearts and Flowers", but the sentiment is occasioned by a remark that Bohling made at the time he turned the territory over to Mr. Price.

He said, "I don't believe in securing business through friendship, but some real friendships have grown out of my business relation with the men whose cooperation has made possible my success with the Company".

When Bohling relinquished the territory, he requested that we make an arrangement which would allow him to see his old friends at least once a year and he will be with you on _____.

Cordially yours,
AMERICAN OPTICAL COMPANY.

Gen. Sales Mgr.

"Promises may get friends, but it is performance that must nurse and keep them."

This letter is one of a series of unique advance letters written by R. E. Spencer, now sales manager of the Remmers Soap Company while he was in charge of sales for the American Optical Company, Southbridge, Mass.

The Man Who Won't Pay Up

THE first principle in planning collection letters is to assume that the man is honest. Some are careless, some are unfortunate, some are irresponsible, but none are dishonest. Plan your collection letters to hit these three classes in succession. Put a smile in each letter, because the man who is in a good humor will be more inclined to pay than if he is grouchy. Collection letters based on this theory will always produce better results than the ordinary cold-blooded "pay-or-I'll-sue" letters usually sent out by the credit department.

But after you have sent out letters covering these three classes there will still be some who haven't paid, possibly not even acknowledged your letters. What are you to do about them? If the amount is small, and delivery difficult to prove, it is sometimes a good plan to wipe the slate clean and send the man a receipted bill. At least you will make a friend, and there is always a chance that such unusual treatment will shame him into settling in part at least. But if the amount is large you will, of course, have to force collection.

At this point most concerns throw tact to the winds and go right after the man hammer and tongs. Being human he will resent your threat. In his mind he will consign you to the snowless regions down below. Enemies have never done a business any good yet, and it is

the opinion of some of our most successful business men that even at the last stage the velvet glove should be used.

One very successful writer of collection letters is F. B. Stevens of Detroit. A series of letters used by him in his business was recently revised by Louis V. Eytinge, a lifer in the Florence penitentiary, and syndicated by him to business houses. These letters have made good under widely varying conditions. They averaged 96 percent collections. Recently Eytinge released the copyright on the letters and published them in "The Mail Bag", a journal of mail salesmanship edited by Tim Thrift of Cleveland. The basis of the first three letters in the series was to fasten a statement to the letters with a string, and make a play in the letter about tying the string on your thumb so you won't forget. When they had failed the smile was dropped from the next letter, which we reproduce here. This letter invariably pulled when all other methods had failed.

Collecting money is a selling proposition. It is only proper and fitting that the sales department have a hand in the preparation of collection letters. Too often the showing made by the credit department in the shape of a comparatively small loss is made at the expense of a comparatively large volume of sales.

LETTER BY
LOUIS VICTOR EYTINGE
FLORENCE, ARIZ.

Dear Sir:

Do you remember the story of Midas, the great king of ancient days? You know he was said to have the magic touch--that everything he touched turned to gold.

Now, if we had the touch of Midas, we'd not be writing this letter. We would not be insisting on payment of the amount you are owing us,
\$-----.

A contract is a contract and should be lived up to. If we give our word to the bank to pay, we have to be right there with the money at the proper time--or if we are not, the bank uses the law on us. All the business of the world would go to smash if we couldn't depend on the sacredness of a commercial agreement. And, in order that we may make our payments as WE agree, we expect, you to pay us the money due us. That's fair, is it not?

Frankly, if some one owed you the money due us from you, for as long a time, and you needed it just as we do--wouldn't you go after it with all the power you could use? To be sure you would. Then please treat us as fairly as you would expect to be treated. Just give us the square deal.

We will expect your prompt remittance
of \$----(amount).

Earnestly yours,

One of a series of five collection letters which performed the remarkable feat of cleaning up an entire list of bad debts for a Pennsylvania business concern that had gone into the hands of a receiver.

Does He Discount His Bills?

IT has been demonstrated over and over again that a customer who discounts his bills will buy more than one who is behind in his account. For that reason the sales department has a direct interest in collections, quite aside from the interest of the credit department. Not all sales executives realize this. Too often they feel that collecting the money is the other fellow's job, and they are not particularly interested in how they do it so long as they make the collection without mussing up the relationship between the customer and the house.

In this connection one concern started a campaign to "get more cash into Dayton". The salesmen were enlisted in the drive. They were told by the management why it was important to get in the money and seventeen distinct reasons were cited as follows: To pay interest on over \$1,000,000 invested in patents and inventions; to purchase new land for the erection of new factory buildings; to build new buildings; to purchase stocks of raw materials; to meet a large payroll of over \$175,000 a week; to replace old machinery with more efficient types; to pay insurance on plant, equipment and branch offices; to save interest that would have to be paid on loans from the bank; to pay taxes which are steadily mounting; to provide for advertising which amounts to over \$500,000 a year; to pay the \$10,000 a month freight bills; to pay sales-

men their commissions; to make donations to worthy causes; to pay employees their share in the profits; unexpected expenses; welfare work; bad debts; refunds, etc. The salesmen for this company had never realized before just how much money it took to operate the business and it opened their eyes. They got behind the campaign and the amount carried on the books was cut down very substantially in a few months.

There are many executives in the same position as these salesmen. They know that it takes a great deal of money to operate a business, but they have become so used to carrying big amounts on the ledger that it never occurs to them that this amount may quite easily be cut down if desired. You will be surprised how easy it is to get your customers to discount their bills if you will sell them on the idea. It is largely a matter of writing them the right kind of a letter and keeping after them consistently.

Even in times like these when money is scarce it is by no means impossible to get your money in quickly, if you will but try. On the opposite page we show a letter that one concern found very successful in this connection. Perhaps you can change it around a bit and use it in your business. The letter is included in this collection through the courtesy of J. J. Sherlock, of the Illinois Nail Company.

LETTER BY
J. J. SHERLOCK
CHICAGO

Mr. Julius Schroeder,
% Schroeder & Sons,
Chicago, Illinois.

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

Figure it out yourself.

"4% for cash" means 15¢ to 25¢ a keg on nails.

"4% for cash" means 24% a year to you.

"4% for cash" means it would pay you well to borrow at the bank and take that discount.

"4% for cash" means the orders are always welcomed, always filled promptly, and never followed up by a "please remit" statement.

There are many advantages in that method of buying. I helps hold your trade, gives you the finest credit in the world, and more profit than any other method.

You would be surprised to know how many business men prefer to buy that way. The extra profit means a whole lot to them and they don't let it get away.

Credit Rating has nothing to do with it, one way or the other. It isn't a matter of "rating" but of SAVING.

Think it over - Figure it out - Try it out.

IT WILL PAY YOU.

Let the "Silent Salesman" handle your next nail order.

Yours for profit,

Sales Manager.

P. S. Of course if you prefer the old terms of "60, 2%-10-from Invoice date" we'll handle the order that way. It's up to you.

The man who wrote this letter is secretary of the Illinois Nail Company. His letters have opened accounts that fill seven ledgers. He does more business by letter than the combined sales of their seven salesmen.

The Customer Who Stopped Buying

WHY is it that so many concerns spend money lavishly and go to no end of effort to get accounts onto their books, only to neglect them afterwards? The inevitable result of this policy is that sooner or later the customer stops buying. As a result your ledgers become cluttered with dead accounts. But because they are in the ledger and carried as "customers" nobody thinks of trying to learn why they stopped.

It is very important that some method be devised so that when an account stops buying it will automatically be called to the attention of the sales department. Two or three letters should be written the "dead" account reselling the whole proposition, and if not getting the customer back on the active list at least finding out the reason for his inactivity. Such a series of letters not only pay large dividends, but very often shed important light on the activities of competitors or the failure of the house to properly serve its trade.

One very good plan to that end is to have the accounting department head up statements for every account on the ledger each month. The active accounts are, of course, filled in on the adding machine and mailed out to the customer. The inactive accounts, represented by the statements that remain, are turned over to the sales department.

The sales department then types a brief message on the bottom of the statement pointing out that the customer's purchases for the month are shown as zero, and expressing the hope that they can be of more service this month. By quoting a price on some especially good seller twenty-five to fifty percent of such accounts can be put back onto the "active" ledger at the expense of a few postage stamps.

Another commonly used plan is to have a transfer binder which will take the loose-leaf ledger pages. When an account has remained inactive for three or more months it is transferred to the "inactive ledger". At frequent periods the sales department takes this ledger and sends out a personally typewritten letter (not a multigraphed form) to each name. A stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed with the letter, and the customer asked to tell why he has stopped buying.

An appeal which seldom fails to bring back a response in such cases is to put the recipient in your place. Ask him to suppose that one of his customers, whom he had always tried hard to please, had suddenly and without apparent cause stopped buying. He would naturally want to know why. Point out that you are in exactly that position now, and you can't understand why a dealer of such importance in his community has just stopped buying.

LETTER BY
J. J. SHERLOCK
CHICAGO

Mr. C. C. Thompson,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Your name has found its way into a little book
on my desk.

I wouldn't mind that, only it's not considered
an honor to be in that little book.

It's what I call "the dead book."

It means the a/c is not now active - it's dead,
just plain dead, - no saving on nails for you, no profit
for us, - neither of us as well off as we ought to be.

Let's get together and put life into the a/c again.

Send me your next inquiry - or order - and let
me use a sharp pencil on it.

If I don't make good the a/c stays "dead."

It won't stay "dead," - if you give me a chance.

Yours for

lively business,

Another of Sherlock's letters. This letter produced 56 percent replies within two weeks from the mailing date. Every reply had a good natured strain to it.

Keeping Dealers on Their Toes

IN the furniture trade the "Lysander Letters" written by a Round Oak Stove salesman and mailed out by the Round Oak Advertising Department to the trade are considered "the best ever". It is always a problem to keep the dealer ginned up, and Salesman McCoy, who writes the Lysander letters seems to have the happy faculty of doing it without the dealer knowing it. A typical McCoy letter is shown on the following pages. This particular letter was sent out following a raise in the price of Round Oak stoves.

As a general rule clever letters don't pay. The reader will say: "What a clever letter", but what you want him to say is: "Where's my pen, I must send them an order right now." Stunts too often detract from the main purpose of the letter. But the Lysander letters seem to be an exception to the rule. They are just enough different from the usual run of letters received by the dealer to quicken his interest. Having read one letter, the dealer wants to read them all, and this in itself is an accomplishment. With the dealers on the look-out for Lysander's letters, it is a simple matter for the house to get over points to the dealers that will very materially stimulate the sale of Round Oak Stoves, and serve to build better dealers.

As in the case of letters going out to jobbers' salesmen, letters to the dealer,

particularly letters intended to develop them into better merchants, must have a plan back of them. The letters should be written on illustrated letter heads, with frequent change in dress, so that they will not become monotonous. They should be short and unselfish. They should talk with the dealer and not at him.

There is a difference. The letter that talks *at* the dealer carries the inference that he is asleep at the switch. It tells him how to run his business, something that every dealer quite naturally thinks he knows how to do far better than anyone else. Nobody thanks you for unsolicited advice, and it is particularly poor tactics to get that "Holier-than-thou" flavor into letters to your dealers. On the other hand, the letter that talks *with* the dealer sympathizes with him in his troubles, talks about what other dealers are doing and how they have done it, and tactfully suggests that possibly the idea is one which he can use.

In spite of the fact that dealers are heavily circularized and literally bombarded with ginned-up letters of all kinds and varieties they will read and respond to the right sort of a letter. The manufacturer or jobber who builds up a good list of dealers as well as their principal clerks, and systematically cultivates them through well planned letters will reap rewards out of all proportion to the money invested.

LETTER BY C. S. McCOY, DOWAGIAC, MICHIGAN

Personal
Letter
to You

Oct. 4, 1916.

Members of the Round Oak Family,

Dear Folks:-

When our old friend Aesop wrote that fable about the hare and the tortoise, he was probably writing good stuff for the times in which he lived. But, if any one were to attempt to pull a line of bunk like that in our day, some one would circulate a petition and said fable writer would find himself being fed through the bars in the funny hut. Turtles might have had a chance in Aesop's day, but since that time, rabbits have learned that sleeping on the job don't feed the family.

It is a source of the keenest gratification to the writer, that he happens to be intimately associated with dealer members of the Round Oak Family, who know how to use their speed to the best advantage and who never go to sleep until after the race is run.

We have just had notice of another advance in price on Round Oak goods and every one of us can pat himself on the back and realize with satisfaction, that we have bought the major portion of our supply at least ten per cent below market price. This was not an accident. It was the intelligent foresight of up-to-date dealers and it should be recognized as such. However, let us not forget that intelligent buying is only half the battle. The other half of the battle is intelligent profit getting. If we have used our wits and shrewdness in making a good buy, why should we not reap the benefits, to which we are justly entitled?

Did you ever know a farmer to sell his wheat for a dollar a bushel when the advertised market price was a dollar and a quarter per bushel? No answer necessary.

We all remember a great many years ago Round Oak heating stoves retailed for a dollar an inch. At that time wheat was selling for about fifty cents or less per bushel. A No. 16 Round Oak heating stove cost at least thirty-two bushels of wheat. Now days wheat is selling at around a dollar and forty cents per bushel. Do you think you could persuade a farmer to give you thirty-two bushels of wheat for a No. 16 Round Oak heating stove? Try it and see. And still the farmer thinks prices have gone up. He is wrong. For him prices have gone down.

Now is the time to raise the retail price on your goods. Consumers were never in a better mood or a better financial condition to stand a raise than at present. Newspapers, magazines, and every other medium of news circulation have paved the way for you. If you were to buy Round Oak, or any other brand of stoves at present prices, you would be forced to raise your price whether or not you wanted to. The goods you purchased last January, or before May 20th, are worth just ten per cent more than the day you bought them. You are entitled to this ten per cent. Ask it and GET IT. It is the reward for the business chance you have taken in placing your order before the advance in price. By raising your price now, you are not only making money, but you are making it easier for the advance you will be compelled to ask of your customers next season.

It frequently happens that a sales letter can break all the rules and still sell goods. The grammar in this letter is terrible; the paragraphs are too long; the letter is too long—yet it made good. What's the answer?

Do not make the mistake of thinking that present prices are inflated values on the part of the manufacturer. There was never a more legitimate market in the history of business and the increase in the cost of stoves has been caused by the same inexorable law that has caused the abnormal advance in the price of wheat viz., SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

It has always been the policy of the Round Oak Folks to give the members of the family the inside dope on business conditions pertaining to our particular business. If you will compare prices listed Jan. 1st with present prices on raw materials, such as copper, Wellsville steel, pig iron, asbestos, aluminum and the many other materials used in the construction of Round Oak goods, to say nothing about the 15% increase in the cost of labor, you will find the Round Oak Folks are justly entitled to considerably more of an advance than they have asked. This comparison can easily be made by any dealer, as prices on raw materials are quoted in all hardware journals and a great many newspapers.

It is an open secret that at present prices, the factory has absorbed a portion of the legitimate increase to which they are entitled, and, with these increased prices in effect, the factory is not making as large a percentage of profit as they made at the old price, taking into consideration the last year's prices on raw material. We do not mean to intimate the factory is losing money or making less money than they did last year. In spite of the decrease in percentage of profit, actual profits, in dollars and cents, will be greater than last year, due to the fact that this year the factory is running to the very last ounce of its capacity in a vain effort to fill orders, while last year normal conditions prevailed and the business was not so greatly in excess of the amount anticipated. It is simply a case of selling two stoves at a smaller profit instead of one stove at a normal profit.

Now, folks, past experience has proved to us that the first cold snap always catches some of us short of goods. And this year the factory will in all probability be the shortest one in the lot. Let us prove our right to the title of LIVE ONES by getting our needs supplied while the going is good. If you anticipate sales for more goods than you have on hand, don't wait until the first cold snap. That is what the other fellow is doing. This is not a plea for more business. The factory is not begging for business for they have more than enough now. Later on it is a moral certainty the mail orders are going to shoot what little surplus stock there is so full of holes the balance won't be worth counting. If there is any shooting to be done I want the other fellow to be the target. Not my territory.

The above is a good business tip and you will thank me for it later. Watch the future and see whether or not I have called the turn. And RAISE YOUR PRICE. Thank you.

C. S. McCoy.

Originator of the Lysander Letters.

Round Oak Representative in
Colorado, Wyoming, and Western Kansas.

This is the second page of the McCoy letter to Round Oak dealers.



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